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ABSTRACT

Kohlberg has produced the most influential theory of moral development both within individuals and within society. As a cognitive-developmentalist, Kohlberg considered mathematical and logical intellectual operations to underlie both social and moral operations. The hierarchical arrangement of the stages was thus grounded in the hierarchical arrangement of those operations. Kohlberg's postconventional period (Moral Stages 5 and 6) begins sometime after adolescence; fully postconventional thinking and action appear after early adulthood. At Moral Stage 5, the Societal Universal stage, people justify actions on the basis on universal abstract principles. Kohlberg also posited a Moral Stage 6 but this proved to be the most problematic stage in his model for conceptual and empirical reasons. Conceptually, Kohlberg had difficulty in setting Moral Stage 6 apart from Moral Stage 5, and empirically, he found it difficult to identify subjects reasoning at Moral Stage 6. A meaningful Moral Stage 6 cannot be defined within individual moral development; it has to be understood as a discourse, as the property of a social enterprise. Thus Kohlberg was looking for Moral Stage 6 in the wrong place, and as a consequence, came up empty handed. At earlier stages, society is seen as a necessary environment for individual moral reasoning. At Moral Stage 6, moral reasoning is constituted by the social enterprise. Moral Stage 6 reasoning requires actual discourse, rather than monologically simulated discourse. (ABL)

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Society and the Highest Stages of Moral Development

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Abstract

In this paper, Moral Stage 6 emerges from an examination of the inadequacies both of Moral Stage 5 and earlier stages in Kohlberg's justice-reasoning stage sequence and of his attempts to define Moral Stage 6. The task is to construct Moral Stage 6 in a non-arbitrary way that satisfies General Stage Model (Commons & Richards, 1984a) criteria for what constitutes a stage. This construction implies a social redefinition of Moral Stage 6. At Moral Stage 6, morality is no longer a property of autonomous individuals, as it is at earlier stages, but a property of the social enterprise. Moral Stage 6 manifests itself only intersubjectively. It is actual discourse and cannot be monologically simulated.

Introduction

The prevalent notions of relativism in political theory have recently been challenged by applications of developmental theory to political development (Emler, Renwick, & Malone, 1983; Habermas, 1979; Rosenberg, 1988, 1989; Rosenberg, Ward & Chilton, 1988; Wagner, 1986, 1990). Whereas relativism posits that a non-arbitrary, acultural evaluation of societal and political systems is impossible, developmental theory provides the means for such an evaluation.

As part of the movement towards understanding political reasoning and action using developmental notions, we examine the relation between society and the highest stages of moral development. In order to do so we will introduce new descriptions of the highest stages of development. Political reasoning is related to moral reasoning insofar as both share an underlying concern for the just. In general, developmental theory can discover the common core of seemingly unique and diverse political ideologies. The theory can order ideological reasoning in a non-relativist sequence, and point to possible avenues of development. More specifically, by focusing on the highest stages of development, developmental theory leads to an understanding of what the possibilities and limitations of the development of political reasoning might look like and why.

Kohlberg has produced the most influential theory of moral development both within individuals (Kohlberg, 1984) and within society (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989). In the course of development, the reasoning about fairness increases in complexity and becomes more inclusive. For example, at the highest child stages, people are always particular persons (such as my self or my parents) who do particular things (If I don't keep my promises, then my parents won't trust me anymore). At all of Kohlberg's adult stages, people can be regarded as abstractions (If one can't keep a promise, it tends to show poor character). "My parents won't trust me" is about specific people and acts whereas "show poor character" is a property of an abstract person. As a cognitive-developmentalist, Kohlberg considered mathematical and logical intellectual operations, such as those used to discern amount, balance, and causality, to underlie both social and moral operations. The hierarchy of the stages was thus grounded in the hierarchical arrangement of those operations.

Cross-cultural data from over 30 societies show that although people's development follows an invariant sequence, the end points of development vary (Colby & Kohlberg, 1987; Snarey, 1985). Movement through the developmental stages is unidirectional. Barring mental illness or loss of mental capacity, people move only up through the stages, never down.

General Stage Model

To counter the possible objection of arbitrariness in the definition of moral stages, we will ground them in the hierarchical-complexity stage criteria of the General Stage Model (GSM). Commons and Richards (1984a, b) suggested that developmental theory addresses two conceptually different issues: 1) the hierarchical complexity of the task to be solved; and 2) the psychology, sociology and anthropology of how such task performance develops. They used the hierarchical complexity of tasks as the basis for construing the notion of stage in the General Stage Model.

Abstract modern algebra grounded hierarchical complexity of tasks in mathematical models (Coombs, Dawes, & Tversky, 1970) and information science (Lindsay & Norman, 1977). The description of stages in the General Stage Model belongs to issue 1) because the General Stage Model is a strictly analytical theory describing discrete orders of hierarchy of task complexity. It sets forth a set of axioms that have to be satisfied in order to define a stage sequence and describes the

necessary analytical properties of stages.

In the General Stage Model (Commons, 1991; Trudeau, 1991) the four Hard Stage Conditions of Kohlberg and Armon (1984) are met and surpassed. Condition 1, "qualitative differences in stages" is shown in a GSM theorem. Condition 2, "invariant sequence," is shown by a theorem that follows from the definitions. Condition 3, As an axiom on tasks, "structure-of-the-whole," is true everywhere, in every domain and content. Condition 4, "stages are hierarchical integrations" is fulfilled by definition.

We add a 5th condition, which makes the General Stage Model even a "harder" stage model. Condition 5 is that the logic of each stage has to be explicit so that the sequence of stages can be tested analytically and new tasks can be classified systematically. The General Stage Model does not posit detailed empirical forms of stages or the empirical processes that cause stage change.
This paper focusses on the analytic properties that Moral Stage 6 should have if it exists. It does not claim to describe an existing pheromenon empirically. Sonnert (in preparation) considers the empirical ramifications of Moral Stage 6. Commons and his colleagues (in preparation) examine possible Moral Stage 6 social perspective-taking in actual institutions, such as the Society for Research in Adult Development and the Program in Psychiatry and the Law in the Department of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School.

At this point, we will briefly review the main elements of the General Stage Model. In this model, the successful completion of a task requires an action of a given hierarchical order of complexity. A logical analysis of those tasks shows the following (Commons & Grotzer, 1990; Commons & Richards, 1984a, b; Commons & Rodriguez, 1990): Actions, including reasoning, at a given order of hierarchical complexity are defined in terms of the actions at the *next lower order* of hierarchical complexity. Actions at a higher order of hierarchical complexity usually transform and organize lower-order actions. We say the higher-order action *coordinates* the actions of the next lower order. This organization of lower-order actions is new and unique and cannot be accomplished by those lower-order actions alone.

For example, multiplying 3 x (9 + 2) requires a distributive action at the concrete order of hierarchical complexity. The distributive actions is as follows: 3 x (9 + 2) = (3 x 9) + (3 x 2) = 27 + 6 = 33. That action coordinates (organizes) adding and multiplying by uniquely organizing the order of those actions. The distributive action is therefore one order more complex than the acts of adding and multiplying alone. Although someone who simply adds can arrive at the same answer, being able to do both addition and multiplication in a coordinated manner indicates a greater freedom of mental functioning. Through such task analysis, the hierarchical complexity of a task may be determined.[1]

The following paragraph gives a capsule description of the analytic properties of the stages in the General Stage Model in descending order. When moral stages are viewed from a General Stage Model perspective, it is useful to translate the moral-stage numbers into the General Stage Model stage numbers. Table 1 shows their correspondence.[2] Stage 6b (Cross-paradigmatic, Moral Stage 7) in the General Stage Model requires actions that coordinate and integrate fields.
A Stage 6a (Paradigmatic, Moral Stage 6) *field* consists of coordinated sets of Stage 5b (Metasystematic, Moral Stage 5) supersystems.

A Stage 5b metasystematic *supersystem* coordinates the Stage 5a (Systematic, Moral Stage 4) systems. A Stage 5a *system* is a

coordination of Stage 4b formal operational (Moral Stage 3/4) relationships--formal operations mark the top stage of Piaget's system of stages as he designated them. A Stage 4b *formal operation* coordinates variables from Stage 4a (Abstract, Moral Stage 3).

A stage 4a *variable*, in turn, is constructed out of Stage 3b (Concrete, Moral Stage 2/3) instances of operations acting upon objects by substituting "equals for equals"--an operation that coordinates two sets of operations from the concrete stage.

Kohlberg's Stages

In what follows, we give our interpretation of Kohlberg's stage theory. Kohlberg posits 3 periods of development in the moral domain, as shown in Table 1: the preconventional, the conventional and the postconventional. Each of these three periods is subdivided into two stages so that Kohlberg's model comprises six stages of moral development.

The preconventional period (Moral Stages 1 and 2) begins in early childhood and extends through elementary school. At Moral Stages 1 and 2, people justify actions in terms of avoiding punishment and obtaining rewards. Adults generally consider moral reasoning during this period inadequate. The judgments do not fulfill conventional norms of adulthood.

The conventional period (Moral Stages 3 and 4) begins at the onset of post-elementary school education and extends across the life-span of all but a small portion of the population. This period generates the conventional norms of adulthood. Reasoning at each stage of this period contains enough logic that it can find its most elaborate expression in some current adult philosophy.

At Moral Stage 3, the *Group* stage, action is justified in terms of the reputation and characterization of the individuals or groups that are involved. People and groups can be good or bad, for instance, nice or nasty, authoritative or untried. Action is often judged on the basis of individuals' or groups' underlying sentiments or motives. Role and person may be confused.

At Moral Stage 3/4, the *Bureaucratic* stage, the reasons given for labeling an action as fair and good are logical and abstract. Bureaucratic norms, laws, rules, and regulations guide behavior and are seen as "given"; they are not seen as responsive to individuals or particular situations. Role and person are no longer confused as they were at the previous stage.

At Moral Stage 4, the *Societal or Institutional* stage, the yardstick for evaluating the morality of an action is the preservation (or destruction) of a system--or a society. Norms, laws, rules and regulations form a logically coherent system. People at this stage reason in terms of how an action would effect one's individual role and status within the system, as well as on the system's capability to function. Hence, there is a tension between societal and personal rights on one hand, and societal and personal duties on the other.

For the individual, part of this tension is a conflict between independence from and dependence on both others and the system. For the government, part of the tension is the conflict between protecting the system's interests and the individuals' interests. The authority of societal law, (individual and group) rights, and duties are all meaningful. "What would happen to society if everyone...?" is a question characteristic of this stage. At this stage, justifications may be parentalist when they refer to the authority of the expert within the system. The term parentalist is used instead of paternalist or maternalist.

The postconventional period (Moral Stages 5 and 6) begins sometime after adolescence;

however, fully postconventional thinking and action appear after early adulthood (Colby & Kohlberg, 1987). Some contemporary philosophies use postconventional arguments. In fact, Armon (1984, 1989) has reinterpreted philosophical debates in terms of conventional versus postconventional arguments. For known societies, only a small portion of members achieves postconventional stages of reasoning.

At Moral Stage 5, the *Societal Universal* stage, people justify actions on the basis of universal abstract principles. Many such principles can be found in the works of philosophic, political, and religious thinkers. Many modern societies also articulate these (Reiser, Bursztajn, Appelbaum, & Gutheil, 1987). Moral Stage 5 principles are general in their application, irrespective of the person affected. The specific content of the principles may be contingent upon the society in question. Rawls's (1971) theory of justice, for example, contains the principle that actions should not worsen the situation of the least advantaged. People are assumed to have different interests and expertise. Society is seen first as a creation of individuals and second as the context in which people develop.

From a developmental-stage perspective, the principles coordinate duties with corresponding rights. They also coordinate dependence with the corresponding independence stances of the previous stage. The interests of the society and the individual are coordinated. The result is to support truly joint decision making and autonomy. Due processes ranging from lotteries to consensus votes are some of the methods of decision making.

Roughly speaking, when persons can engage in real discourse, this is the preferred method of decision-making, but real discourse can be replaced by imaginary discourse if real discourse fails or is impossible. Unconventional decisions may be sanctioned as long as the process of arriving at those decisions is reasonable in the light of higher principles. Principles do not emerge from discourse but from notions of universal human rights and dignity.

Kohlberg also posited a Moral Stage 6, but this proved to be the most problematic stage in his model for conceptual and empirical reasons. Conceptually, Kohlberg had difficulty in setting Moral Stage 6 apart from Moral Stage 5 (Diessner & Commons, in preparation), and empirically, he found it difficult to identify subjects reasoning at Moral Stage 6.

Plan of the Argument

In order to fully discuss the relationship between society and moral development, this paper makes a new proposal for Kohlberg's Moral Stage 6. By addressing the conceptual problems with Moral Stage 6, we hope that the empirical problems will be solved as well. A meaningful Moral Stage 6 cannot be defined within individual moral development; it has to be understood as discourse, as the property of a social enterprise. Thus, Kohlberg was looking for Moral Stage 6 in the wrong place and, as a consequence, came up empty handed.

The paper advances the proposition that Moral Stage 6 relates to society in a way that is qualitatively different from all preceding stages. At earlier stages, society is seen as a necessary environment for individual moral reasoning. At Moral Stage 6, moral reasoning is constituted by the social enterprise.

The General Stage Model (Commons & Richards, 1984a, 1984b; Commons & Rodriguez, 1990; Commons, Stein & Richards, 1987, April) serves as the basis for critiquing Kohlberg's Moral Stage 6 notion (Kohlberg, 1986; Kohlberg, Boyd, & Levine, 1986, 1990). After considering certain shortcomings of Moral Stage 5 reasoning, we develop and explore a discursive notion of

Moral Stage 6. We conclude with an examination of both the individual and the societal implications of Moral Stage 6.

Definition of Moral Stage 6

Within the General Stage Model, we define Moral Stage 6 using the hierarchical coordination criterion. Moral Stage 5 (GSM Stage 5b) meta-rules coordinate Moral Stage 4 systems of rights and duties by prioritizing them. The Moral Stage 4 (GSM Stage 5a) systems coordinate logical relations (GSM Stage 4b) among rights propositions (GSM Stage 4a) and among duties propositions (GSM Stage 4a). At Moral Stage 6 (GSM Stage 6a) coordinations of systems of rights and duties are coordinated. The crucial point is that paradigmatic (GSM Stage 6a) coordinations cannot be done by one individual alone, i.e., by an individual's coordination of metasystems of rights and duties. Individual efforts are not sufficient. An individual's coordination would be either inconsistent or indeterminate.

From an individual's perspective, one would not know which incomplete but consistent metasystematic coordination to choose. Rather, paradigmatic coordinations are a property of the social enterprise. A paradigmatic coordination cannot be monologically predicted, because it consists of a set of metasystematic coordinations that may be inconsistent or incomplete or both. All the individual metasystematic coordinations can affect each other in unpredictable ways. Any single paradigmatic coordination might be changed by the interaction and the exchange of information and arguments among the participating metasystematic coordinations.

No *a priori* consideration can predict the direction or extent of the change. The direction, extent and nature of the change can be determined only by the actual process. In other words, actual interaction among the metasystematic coordinations is needed in order to arrive at their coordination. Adapting a valuable Habermasian concept, we call this coordination of coordinations discourse.

Given the discursive properties of Moral Stage 6, there will be no single instantiation of Moral Stage 6. Moral Stage 6 recognizes the uniqueness of every individual and system; it understands the basis for their differences. It respects individual differences but integrates them in a discursive solution, whereas at the end of

Moral Stage 4 people see these differences as arbitrary and at most historical, without understanding how to transcend them, and at Moral Stage 5, people rely on universal principles to evaluate these differences. Moral Stage 6 replaces hypothetical universalization with real consensus. Moral Stage 6 is actual discourse rather than hypothetical discourse.[3]

One has to be critically aware of the limitations of one's own viewpoint. Moral Stage 6 reasoning implies some understanding of the norms of societies and their histories, as they are and how they might be. The Moral Stage 6 view of society focuses on societal consensus that is historically unique and limited. The ideal has to be saturated with the actual and divested of its context-free universalist validity claim that is typical of Moral Stage 5.

The Moral Stage 6 view has to be respectful and understanding, but still critically aware of alternatives. Again, this in no way implies cultural relativism or the like, because the coordinations at Moral Stage 6 are highly constrained by hierarchical complexity requirements. Although there are many Moral Stage 6 solutions, the creation of each is highly unlikely.

Moral Stage 6 implications on the individual level

The central element of individuals' "reasoning at Moral Stage 6" is the realization that

individual moral reasoning is limited and attainment of Moral Stage 6 is beyond their individual efforts. Moral Stage 6 has to be accomplished by actual cooperation of all moral reasoners in a dialogue.

Individuals must have the potential to reason at Moral Stage 5, but, in addition, they must understand the dilemma of Moral Stage 5 reasoning and surrender part of moral autonomy or responsibility to the discourse where Moral Stage 6 reasoning takes place. Again, Moral Stage 6 reasoning itself cannot be found in individuals but only in actual discourse.

We now demonstrate how more traditional Moral Stage 6 notions of unconditional respect for, and solidarity with, others (Kohlberg, 1986) can easily be accommodated into the new notion of the social nature of Moral Stage 6. Moral Stage 6 is the most radical expression of unconditional respect for others, because a Moral Stage 6 solution depends on the actual approval of all the others. Each and every person has "vetopower" against the possibility of a Moral Stage 6 solution. At this stage, the others have to speak for themselves. There is no way in which all possible contributions can be simulated.

A person reasoning at Moral Stage 6 recognizes the inclination towards egocentrism in people but emphasizes that each individual is part of humanity. Whereas local and particular views represent the effects of each person's life, genes, and culture, there are unifying principles that are universal. Compared with Moral Stage 5, the concept of universal principles takes on another meaning, however. At Moral Stage 5, moral principles are universal at the price of limiting respect for others; at Moral Stage 6 principles are subjected to discourse to allow the universalization of respect for others.

Solidarity extends not just to one's own social group but to humanity. Intermediate particularistic social groups, such as those based on gender, race, religious community, or nation, lose significance. There is a Hegelian dichotomization between the universal community of humankind on the one hand and the autonomous and emancipated individual on the other hand (also see Armon, 1989). In contrast to Moral Stage 5 solidarity, which rests on fundamental moral principles that are considered valid for all humans, Moral Stage 6 solidarity extends to all humans precisely because there are no abstract universal principles.

Ultimately, all individuals are alone because they cannot completely take another's perspective. At the same time, all individuals are interdependent, because everybody may have to rely on everybody else as partners in discourse. Moral Stage 6 "reasoners" know that perfect understanding between one another is impossible. They also know that it is necessary to understand one another at a pragmatic level and that the world must maintain discursive interaction.

There is no illusion of establishing universal moral principles. Moral Stage 6 solidarity counterbalances alienation. All individuals are alienated from one another, but they are all connected by the bonds of universal solidarity, which acknowledges no preferred individual or group. Moral Stage 6 recognizes the dilemma of the person at Moral Stage 5: we cannot choose who we are; we cannot take another person's perspective completely. It is not enough to say that I assume another person's point of view ("stand in this person's shoes"), because it is impossible for me to be the other person, have lived the other person's life and experienced the world as the other person has. Exactly because universal rules fall short of capturing the uniqueness of individuals, solidarity has to refer to particular individuals and, by encompassing all individuals, becomes universal in a new meaning of the term.

At Moral Stage 6, individuals are involved

with the community at its different levels. There is no issue of individual versus societal rights (Moral Stage 4), nor of their coordination (Moral Stage 5). Individual rights are constituted in the societal process, which, in turn, depends on the input of all individuals. As Habermas points out, non-strategic (genuinely communicative) thinking has to replace strategic thinking before real discourse can begin. Strategic thinking is goal-oriented. It sets the agenda for ourselves and our institutions. By fixing the unconscious as well as conscious agenda, strategic thinking makes it impossible to hear others accurately or to co-construct a perspective of reality. One has to have the strength to stop defending and asserting oneself while communicating. This may require metasystematic ego development and beneficence.

4-Step Model of Equilibration in the Moral Domain

Systematic to Metasystematic Stage Transition

Temporarily fully equilibrated stage 5a behavior (Revised Moral Stage 4)
(Stage 5b-0, 5a-4) *a.* First, subjects attend to only one aspect of a problem. This is Moral Stage 4 in Kohlberg's scheme or the Absolutist stage. The subjects attend to the system of which they are a part. For example, they see a problem either in terms of rights or duties but not both. Or, they may see the problem as hurtful or helpful but not both. They may perceive a voting system as fair or unfair.

Transitions to the Metasystematic Stage
(Stage 5b-1) *b.* Second, subjects negate their concentration on the one aspect of the system they previously attended and turn to considering another aspect. They might switch from responsibilities to rights, from the satisfying the power that be to satisfying the self. People may switch from supporting a voting system to rejecting it, or adopting an alternative. This is the beginning part of the relativism that Kohlberg refers to as Moral Stage 4/5. This is the very beginning of metasystematic reasoning.

(Stage 5b-2) *a. or b.* Third, subjects begin to alternate between attending to one aspect of the problem and then to another. This is the next part of relativism that Kohlberg refers to as Moral Stage 4/5. Cultural relativism and dualism prevail. The frame of reference in which a system is embedded comes into play.

There are two important variants of this step. One is the belief that all systems of ethics are equally valid. That is system A or system B or system C could be valid. The rules for evaluation change with the frame of reference appropriate to the system.

The other variant is a kind of situational ethics where different ethical principles are applied in different situations. That is system A is best in situation 1, and system B is best in situation 2, etc. For example, rights might be important in one situation and duties in another. One might prefer a voting system in which to the ideological positions of the candidates matter at the national level. But one might prefer a voting system in which the incumbency of candidates matters at the constituency level.

(Stage 5b-3) *a. and b.* Fourth, a cognitive conjunction of the two aspects of the problem takes place. For example, systems of rights and systems of duties are considered together. There is no full reversibility. Reversibility would mean that if one has a right to vote in a fair election one has the duty to abide by the decisions such as paying taxes. This is Kohlberg's early Moral Stage 5. Again, many subjects scored as Moral Stage 5 in Kohlberg's scheme fall into this group.

There is a yearning for order but the subjects see the subjectivity of forced conjunction of rights and duties. First good conjunctions are generally recognized. Later bad ones are

rejected. For example for voters, making the ballot secrete (system a), is general seen as an improvement to voting systems with public ballots.

Yet to know whether to return incumbents, one would like their ballots in office to be public (system b). This seems to successfully contextualize each system so that they can jointly apply. Yet what do we do about votes on secrete national security matters or personal votes of office holders for other candidates? At this step, people are aware of the different systems they would like to combine, but they lack the proclivity to combine them in a systematic and sensible manner. This is transitional metasystematic (5b-3).

Temporarily fully equilibrated stage 5b behavior (Revised Moral Stage 5) (Stage 5b-4, Stage 6a-0) *a. with b.* (Also Stage 6a-a.) Fifth, from the subjects' conjunction of the two aspects of the problem, they discover new relationships and interrelationships between the aspects of the problem. This is Kohlberg's Moral Stage 5/6 and old Moral Stage 6 as Diessner and Commons (in preparation) show. It is fully metasystematic (5b-4). Rights and duties are necessary reciprocals. There is the double golden rule. One's rights are others' duties and visa versa. Because one has rights one also has corresponding duties. This stage is also Step 6a-0, the departure point of the transition to the paradigmatic stage.

Metasystematic Stage to Paradigmatic Stage Transition

Temporarily fully equilibrated stage 5b behavior (Revised Moral Stage 5) (Stage 6a-0) see Stage 5b-4 above. *a.* First, when Moral Stage 6 is suggested, it is perceived as coordinated systems (see Kohlberg's old Moral Stage 6). There is no new paradigm, however. Instead, there is a consideration of a "possible" Moral Stage 6 proposal. A supersystem containing a consistent subset of possible conditions for a fair voting system is selected and defended on the basis of "the least advantaged" voter. All of this is also the end of Moral Stage 5.

Transitions to the Paradigmatic Stage (Stage 6a-1) *b.* Second, there may be a consideration of an alternative Moral Stage 6 proposal. Or, there may be a denial or negation of Moral Stage 6. They may elucidate what is wrong with the major attempt in Moral Stage 6a-0. This is the first step in Kohlberg's new Moral Stage 6. This step corresponds to the beginning of the paradigmatic stage (6a).

(Stage 6a-2) *a. or b.* Third, there are considerations of a number of "possible" Moral Stage 6 proposals. There is an alternation between adopting various conditions people think are necessary for Moral Stage 6. For example, the fair voting proposals from step 6a-0 and step 6b-1 are alternatively supported.

(Stage 6a-3) *a. and b.* Fourth, there are attempts at a new Moral Stage 6 integration of moral meta-perspectives. It is a transitional step towards paradigmatic operations. There is just a juxtaposition of considerations people think are necessary for Moral Stage 6. There generally is some recognition of possible Moral Stage 6 proposals. Subjects detect a positive match of proposals to some ideal template for a sufficient coordination. Later, subjects develop a proclivity to reject false attempts at coordinating metasystems. Subjects now detect failures to match all of the ideal template for a sufficient coordination. For example, subjects find that attempts of a coordination of new Moral Stage 5 supersystems are either incomplete or inconsistent.Both detections do not occur simultaneously until the next step. There is no coordination of a positive sort forming a new paradigm.

Temporarily fully equilibrated stage 6b

behavior (Revised Moral Stage 6) (Stage 6a-4) *a. with b.* This is fully paradigmatic. Fifth, at Moral Stage 6, morality is no longer a property of autonomous individuals, as it is at earlier stages, but a property of the social enterprise. Moral Stage 6 manifests itself only inter-individually. It is actual discourse and cannot be monologically simulated. The non-strategic discourse co-constructs a paradigm for addressing the moral dilemma.

Stage and Social Enterprise

By locating Moral Stage 6 in the social enterprise we can acknowledge the impossibility of an individual's reconstructing of a Moral Stage 6 reasoning process without giving in to the temptation to assign transcendental properties to Moral Stage 6. Transcendentalism may be a consequence of failing to discern the importance of, or to function at, the next stage. Baldwin's (1906) version of postformal reasoning was transcendental. Gilligan and Murphy (1979) and Gilligan, Murphy and Tappa (1990) suggest the need for a transcendental stage. For a discussion of transcendental solutions in terms of hard and soft stages see Kohlberg, 1990). Many Moral Stage 6 models embody transcendental properties, as does Kohlberg's (Kohlberg, 1984; Kohlberg & Power, 1981; Kohlberg, 1990) Moral Stage 7. Some of the people Kohlberg has chosen as exemplars for Moral Stage 6 had a transcendental apocalyptic view of the world, which supposedly liberated them from reasoning at Moral Stage 5. Some researchers (Alexander, Drucker & Langer, 1990; Koplowitz, personal communication, June 21-23, 1985) have divided the transcendental from the traditional developmental stages.

The social construction of Moral Stage 6 entails a new relationship between moral reasoning and society. At all levels of development, the stages of moral development are, of course, related to stages of societal development. On the one hand, the political legitimation of societies must be adapted to make sense to the moral reasoning of their members. On the other hand, the societal environment influences the moral development of individuals. But at Moral Stages lower than Moral Stage 6, in contrast, moral development and societal development coincide. We now identify the societal prerequisites of Moral Stage 6 reasoning (political system, culture) as well as a major societal corollary of the Moral Stage 6 notions of universal respect and solidarity (collective identity).

Political System

The coordination of society cannot be carried out by authoritarian means, because there is no way to legitimize authoritarian behavior at Moral Stage 6. The political system underlying Moral Stage 6 discourse must follow some egalitarian and democratic principles. Decisions have to be discursively sanctioned. The ultimate sovereign is "the people," whereby people does not mean members of a particular nations, class, culture, or any group as in earlier stages, but the universal community of human beings. It follows that a particular political unit below a universal world society cannot be legitimated in principle.

Culture

Universally available means of co-construction of knowledge and the communication of judgement ad experience are central features of Moral Stage 6. Organizational structure has to provide ongoing opportunities for the co-construction.

Collective Identity

A particular society can no longer be based on a particular collective identity, because these collective identities subside and lose their validity. Solidarity is universal, extending its

range from a particular social group to everybody. Moral Stage 6 collective identity is the universal community of cosmopolitans, of citizens of the world. This concept of Moral Stage 6 as a Moral Stage 6 society is apparently utopian. The problem of non-Moral Stage 6 elements in a Moral Stage 6 society is addressed by Sonnert (submitted). In a real societal environment, the possibilities of social Moral Stage 6 reasoning are limited. People who understand Moral Stage 6 will invariably be forced to act within institutional contexts that are not conducive to Moral Stage 6.

Conclusions

The study of moral development has, traditionally, been the study of individual moral development. At Moral Stage 6, however, the focus on individual moral development becomes insufficient because moral reasoning is socially constituted. Moral Stage 6 reasoning requires actual discourse, rather than monologically simulated discourse.

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1. The Notion of Stages: In the General Stage Model (GSM) of Commons and Richards (1984b), when a person successfully performs a task at a given order of hierarchical complexity, the stage of their performance is of the equivalent order. Throughout the text, the GSM stage numbers appear in the parentheses ( ). The General Stage Model (Commons and Richards, 1984,b) as well as Skill Theory (Fischer, Hand & Russell, 1984) has demonstrated that Kohlberg's (1984), Armon's (1984a, b) and Selman's (1976) half stages are actually whole stages and will be referred to as such here.

2. E. Joram (personal communication, Friday, June 26, 1987) suggested a modification to the upper end of the stage sequence in the General Stage Model. What is now called Stage 6b, cross-paradigmatic (Moral Stage 7), directly followed Stage 5b, metasystematic (Moral Stage 5). The name metasystematic was suggested by Deanna Kuhn. Now, we recognize an intermediate stage number as Stage 6a, paradigmatic (Moral Stage 6). The name paradigmatic was inspired by Thomas Kuhn's (1962, 1972) work.

3. In contrast, General Stage Model Stage 6a can be monological in non-moral domains. A prominent example of paradigmatic reasoning is Darwin's theory of evolution. Another example that has not been achieved yet is the synthesis of quantum and relativity theories in physics. Here nature makes possible a monologically discernible solution to the problems of incompleteness and inconsistency facing the coordination of coordinations. Thus nature and society have equivalent functions in the two types of General Stage Model Stage 6a, monological and dialogical reasoning. equivalent under the threat of incompleteness and inconsistency.